

**Laura – please send this release on or before June 1 to the Echo OR press list.**

For immediate release.

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## **America in Bloom Judges Visit Echo, OR**

Judges from the America in Bloom (AIB) national awards program will visit Echo, OR on June 13 and 14. This is Echo's sixth entry in the America in Bloom national awards program. Echo has twice won its population category. The town is one of 28 towns across America working on local revitalization programs with the hopes of receiving a prestigious America in Bloom national award.

Echo is competing against Slippery Rock, PA; Gallipolis, OH; and Castle Rock, WA in the under 4,000 population category.

Judges are Dwight Lund and Alex Pearl.



Dwight Lund



Alex Pearl

**Dwight Lund** was born and raised in a family greenhouse business that started as a wholesale florist. Dwight, who lives in Warrenville, Illinois, attended the University of Illinois earning a BS degree in Floriculture. Over the next 40 years he held positions as grower, manager, partner and eventually president of the company. During the years the wholesale florist business evolved to a retail greenhouse, flower shop and garden center.

In addition Dwight spent 20 years in education teaching Horticulture classes at Kishwaukee Community College and DuPage Area Vocational Education Authority.

Lund commented, "The Echo newsletter has kept me informed about what is going on so I look forward to seeing the changes. This will be my third AIB visit to Echo."

**Alex Pearl**, Centerville, Ohio has been an AIB judge and among the group of founding individuals since the America in Bloom's inception. In fact, Alex was one of the judges during the pilot program in 2001. Alex is a retired Horticulture educator whose career has taken him in many different directions. He has held responsible positions in higher education, botanical gardens, private industry and in his own business. Alex holds degrees from the State University of New York, New Mexico State University, University of Delaware and The Ohio State University. He is an active member of various trade and amateur Horticultural organizations. His long association with in bloom programs through America in Bloom and the Canadian program Communities in Bloom has taken him to cities across both countries and Europe. He is a strong advocate for the benefits in bloom programs provide citizens and the overall communities. Alex's motto is 'plants changes lives'. Alex is honored to be a part of the America in Bloom program.

Pearl said, "Both Dwight and I have experienced the wonderful enthusiasm of Echo citizens on both the national and international levels. Echo is an outstanding community in so many ways. I look forward to viewing the continual evolution in the community."

Participants have opportunities to receive recognition in the following areas:

- Bloom rating
- Population category winner
- Outstanding achievement award – the “best of the best” over all participants in each of the six evaluated criteria
- Special mention – for what the judges deem to be an extraordinary project or program.
- Population category winners are invited to participate in international competition via the Communities in Bloom program in Canada.
- Community Champion
- YouTube Video

To date, more than 200 towns and cities from 41 states have participated in the program and more than 20 million people have been touched by it. Awards will be announced on September 21, 2013 at AIB’s National Symposium and Awards, held this year in Orlando, FL.

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America in Bloom is a non-profit 501c3 corporation whose mission is to promote nationwide beautification through education and community involvement by encouraging the use of flowers, plants, trees, and other environmental and lifestyle enhancements.